

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1723

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USHISSION USUN 609

USIA WASHDC

DIA WASHDC

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, SY

SUBJECT: SYRIAN MEDIA SUMMARY FOR FEB 9

1. SUMMARY: WALDHEIM'S OBSERVATIONS THAT ISRAELI
OBJECTIONS TO UN ROLE CAN BE OVERCOME RECEIVED TOP BILLING
IN MEDIA. HEAVY EMPHASIS GIVEN ECONOMIC ASPECTS GENSCHER
VISIT. ASAD MET WITH PRO-SYRIAN LEBANESE GROUP. PNC
CHAIRMAN FAHUM URGED PALESTINIANS NOT BE EXCLUDED FROM
DISCUSSIONS ON THEIR POSSIBLE ROLE AT GENEVA; WHILE SYRIAN
MEDIA EXPRESSED SATISFACTION WITH RECENT INTR-PLO DEVELOP-
MENTS. RABIN'S MEETING WITH IVORY COAST PRESIDENT DEPICTED
AS MANEUVER TO REESTABLISH ISRAELI DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS
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IN AFRICA. E D SUMMARY.

2. SYRIAN MEDIA FOCUSED ON WALDHIEM'S REMARKS IN JORDAN
REACTING TO ISRAELI FONMIN ALLON'S STATEMENTS EXCLUDING
UN FROM MEANINGFUL ROLE IN PEACE SETTLEMENT ESFORTS.
PRESS HEADLINED: "WALDHEIM--ISRAELI POSITION IS NOT NEW.
THERE IS STRONG WORLD TREND SUPPORTING RESUMPTION OF GENEVA

CONFERENCE*"" ACCOMPANYING ARTICLES REPORTED WALDHEIM'S OBSERVATIONS THAT ISRAELI OBJECTIONS COULD BE OVERCOME, AND THAT ARAB STATES WERE INSISTING ON CONVENING CONFERENCE ASAP. LEAD EDITORIAL IN AL-BAATH ARGUED THAT ISRAEL HAD ALWAYS OPPOSED UN, AND ITS PRESENT ATTITUDE NOTHING NEW, "NEVERTHELESS, IT HAD NOT BEEN MADE SO PUBLIC AND WITH SUCH ARROGANCE, SINCE THE ENEMY WAS NOT FORCED TO EXPOSE ITS REAL FACE UNTIL ARAB DIPLOMACY AND SYRIAN DIPLOMACY, IN PARTICULAR, BROUGHT IT FACE TO FACE WITH ACTUAL TEST OF PEACE WITHOUT ANY ROOM FOR MANEUVER."

3. ARRIVAL OF FRG FONMIN GENSCHER EVENING FEB 8 REPORTED ON FRONT PAGES. WHILE INITIAL ARTICLES STRESSED POLITICAL ASPECTS OF VISIT, NEWS BROADCAST AT 1415L, FEB 9, CONCENTRATED ALMOST TOTALLY ON ECONOMIC MATTERS CONNECTED WITH VISIT INCLUDING GENSCHER'S MEETING WITH MINECON IMADI AND SYRIAN HOPES FOR FRG ASSISTANCE AND INVESTMENT IN HARMONY WITH ITS NEW FIVE-YEAR PLAN.

4. PRES ASAD HELD MEETING WITH KAMAL SHATILA AND DELEGATION OF "PAN-ARAB, NATIONAL FRONT, AND ISLAMIC BODIES" FROM LEBANON. AFTER MEETING SHATILA GAVE STATEMENT IN WHICH HE DECLARED THAT DELEGATION DISCUSSED RECENT DEVELOPMENTS WITH ASAD AND EXPRESSED CONCERN FOR "UNITY OF THE LEBANESE AND THE NEED TO STRENGTHEN THE LEBANESE STATE AS A COHERENT UNIT."

5. INTERVIEW PNC CHAIRMAN KHALID FAHUM GAVE DAMASCUS-BASED AL-QABAS CORRESPONDENT EXCERPTED ON FRONT PAGE. FAHUM UNCLASSIFIED

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REITERATED HIS SUPPORT FOR ARAB SOLIDARITY TO CONFRONT ISRAEL AND ADMINISHED THAT DECISIONS ON PALESTINIAN PARTICIPATION AT GENEVA SHOULD NOT BE MADE IN ABSENCE OF PALESTINIANS, SINCE THEIR CAUSE "IS ONE OF SURVIVAL NOT BORDERS." WHEN ASKED ABOUT FORMATION OF PALESTINIAN GOVT FAHUM HEDGED STATING IT WOULD DEPEND ON WHETHER IT WOULD LEAD TO GREATER COHESION AND INCREASE INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION. HE EXPRESSED VIEW THAT IT IN ANY CASE WAS FOR PNC TO DECIDE.

6. DECISION TAKEN BY PLO OVER COMPOSITION AND DATE FOR CONVENING PNC AND CONDUCTING OF DIALOGUE WITH JORDAN APPLAUDED IN EDITORIAL APPEARING IN AL-BAATH. EDITORIAL STATED THAT WHAT REMAINS TO BE DONE IS DRAWING UP OF AGENDA FOR P C AND SELECTION OF NEW PLO EXCOMM. IT CLAIMED PNC WILL HOLD QUIET SESSION SINCE DISCUSSION OF SCHEMES WHICH MAY BE DIVISIVE (READ ESTABLISHMENT MINI-STATE, FORMATION OF PROVISIONAL GOVT, ETC.) WILL BE PUT OFF "BECAUSE THEY STILL SCHEMES OVER WHICH DIALOGUE IS FUTILE." IT PREDICTED

THAT FORTHCOMING SESSION WILL BE CONFINED TO FRAMEWORK OF
TEN-POINT PROGRAM OF PREVIOUS PNC SESSION. EDITORIAL
IMPLIED THAT IF 13TH PNC SESSION HARMONIOUS, IT WOULD
ENCOURAGE ARABS INSIDE ISRAEL AND OCCUPIED TERRITORIES TO
UNDERTAKE MILITARY ACTION.

6. ANOTHER AL-BAATH EDITORIAL ACCUSED ISRAEL USING TALKS
WITH PRES. HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY TO BREAK STRANGLEHOLD WHICH
WAS IMPOSED IN AFRICA AGAINST ISRAEL AFTER OCTOBER WAR.
MURPHY

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